

# STARTUP INCUBATOR LAUNCHES WITH CLOUD AND MANAGED SERVICES SUPPORT



In just a few months, Executive Director Nicola Corzine has welcomed more than 500 entrepreneurs and founders to the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center.

The Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center helps aspiring entrepreneurs and business founders find success.

## At a Glance

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**COMPANY:** Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center

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**LOCATION:** San Francisco

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**EMPLOYEES:** 9

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**TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT STAFF:** 0

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**BRIEF HISTORY:** The nonprofit Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center educates and connects aspiring and current entrepreneurs. Established in 2014 with support from the Nasdaq Educational Foundation, the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center serves the greater Bay Area community through differentiated events, meaningful entrepreneurial education and a strong commitment to mentorship.

Many of Silicon Valley's top companies trade on Nasdaq, from well-established firms like Apple, Cisco Systems and Intel to newer companies such as Facebook and Netflix. Now, the stock exchange wants to do its part to foster the region's startup community.

The Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center, which opened in September, features a 13,000-square-foot facility in San Francisco, complete with meeting rooms, a café and event space. At the Center, aspiring and current entrepreneurs of all backgrounds and industries can take free classes and workshops, where they can network with mentors, experts and each other.

"Being an entrepreneur or founder is a long journey with daily challenges, so we want to be a hub where they can be inspired," says Nicola Corzine, the Center's executive director. "It's a landing spot for them to learn and to receive the emotional and psychological support they need."

Organizers wanted to launch the nonprofit center quickly and affordably, so earlier this year, they took a page out of the startup playbook and turned to the cloud for technology.

"We had a rapid deployment," Corzine recalls. "We were expected to break ground and move in within an 18-week schedule. To ensure we could serve entrepreneurs from day one, we had to be smart with where we would spend both resources and time."

The Center, which has nine full-time employees and a handful of part-time staff, subscribes to Microsoft Office 365 for email, online file storage and office productivity software; Adobe Creative Cloud for design work; and two cloud providers for phone and video conferencing services.

To provide ample bandwidth and ensure reliability, the

Center purchased Cisco Meraki networking and Wi-Fi gear and hired CDW to remotely manage the network over the cloud.

"Everything is hosted in the cloud or managed from the cloud, which simplifies things immensely," says Tim Orkus, Nasdaq's senior manager of IT. "It eliminates a large amount of overhead that typically goes into infrastructure and support."

## Cloud-Enabled

Nasdaq's IT department in New York manages a highly demanding stock exchange environment, where uptime and security are paramount. So last year, when the Nasdaq Educational Foundation announced plans to build the Entrepreneurial Center 3,000 miles away in San Francisco, it presented the IT staff with new challenges and opportunities.

"We asked ourselves, what could we do if we're not tied to the enormous infrastructure we have that supports the Nasdaq?" Orkus says. "It was an open, empty facility, so we were working with a completely blank slate."

Because of the Center's nonprofit status, Orkus and his IT team considered cost, but also thought about ease of support and long-term flexibility. They chose cloud and managed services — a decision Corzine embraced.

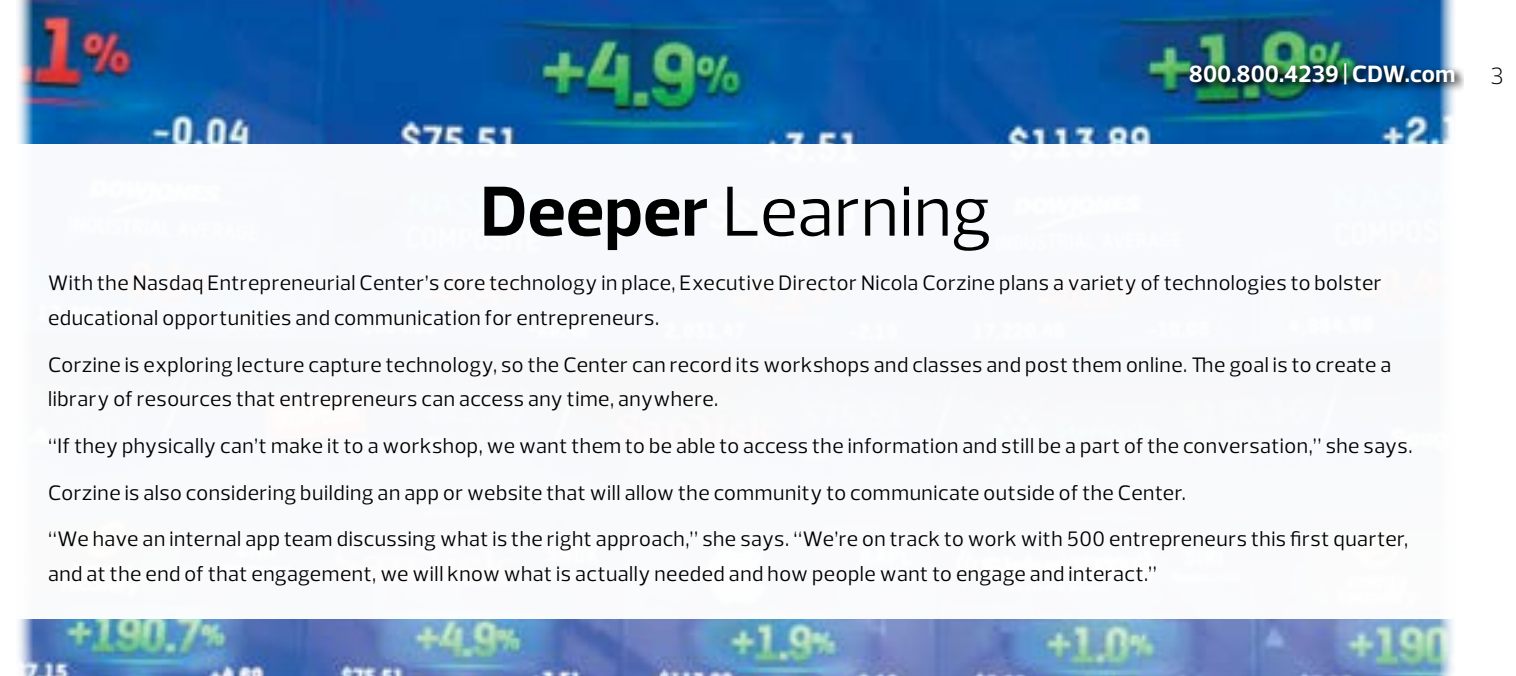
Not only did cloud and managed services allow the Center to get up and running quickly with minimal IT investment, but also it eliminated the need for an onsite IT administrator, allowing the organization to invest those dollars in programs and services, Corzine says.

"This way, all the knowledge does not lie with one technical person," she says. "If that person leaves, they take that knowledge with them. We don't want that kind of vulnerability, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area, where the cost for tech talent is at an all-time high."

Cloud-enabled technology allows Tim Orkus, Nasdaq's senior manager of IT, to manage the Center's infrastructure at a lower price point.

"We partnered with CDW because we wanted a vendor that could own the implementation from start to finish."

— Tim Orkus, Senior Manager of IT, Nasdaq



## Deeper Learning

With the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center's core technology in place, Executive Director Nicola Corzine plans a variety of technologies to bolster educational opportunities and communication for entrepreneurs.

Corzine is exploring lecture capture technology, so the Center can record its workshops and classes and post them online. The goal is to create a library of resources that entrepreneurs can access any time, anywhere.

"If they physically can't make it to a workshop, we want them to be able to access the information and still be a part of the conversation," she says.

Corzine is also considering building an app or website that will allow the community to communicate outside of the Center.

"We have an internal app team discussing what is the right approach," she says. "We're on track to work with 500 entrepreneurs this first quarter, and at the end of that engagement, we will know what is actually needed and how people want to engage and interact."

## Agile IT

When Corzine arrived in January, she explained the Center's day-to-day technology needs to Orkus, which allowed him to focus on specific technologies.

On any given day, the venue might hold a workshop for 20 people while simultaneously hosting an event with hundreds of people in attendance, so a high-density wireless network was a necessity, she told him.

Furthermore, Corzine and her staff planned to partner with academic institutions, companies and other nonprofits worldwide, so having high-end video conferencing for business meetings was critical.

To meet high-bandwidth needs, Orkus needed to build a fast, reliable network, so he called CDW for suggestions. CDW experts recommended Cisco Meraki networking equipment because of its ease of use and remote management capabilities.

"It was the perfect solution for the Center because it's fully manageable over the cloud," says Richard Noonan, mobility solution architect for CDW. "You log in to the dashboard and get a tremendous amount of network visibility. It's easy to configure security policies. You get graphics and charts on traffic. There's a lot of sophistication at a reasonable cost."

Orkus purchased eight Cisco Meraki switches, a dozen 802.11ac wireless access points and network security appliances. And he hired CDW's Managed Services team to remotely monitor and manage the network 24/7.

## Secure Solution

CDW engineers designed, installed and configured the equipment at the Center. Before installing the wireless equipment, a third-party CDW provider performed a site survey to ensure proper placement of wireless access points and full coverage throughout the facility, says Bob Catala, a field account executive for CDW.

Throughout the entire network design and installation process, Orkus and his team provided guidance to CDW, including a requirement to install security appliances for content filtering and intrusion detection and prevention.

"The Entrepreneurial Center is under the Nasdaq brand. It's more visible than the typical nonprofit of that size, so security is critical," says Orkus, who traveled to San Francisco several times to oversee the buildout. "The dedicated security hardware gives us security that is much closer to what we do on our own network at Nasdaq, but in a smaller footprint and without the same price tag."

To ensure redundancy, the Center subscribes to two Internet service providers offering 100-megabit-per-second connections. If one provider goes down, the other will keep services running. One of the ISPs supplied its own router, but Nasdaq's IT team purchased one Cisco Integrated Services Router to connect the Center's internal network with the second ISP.

The Nasdaq IT staff comes from a stock exchange mindset, so providing users with the highest quality of service and full network redundancy are two important best practices, Orkus says.

"We expect most people will come in with more than one device, so we designed the speed of the network, the links to the Internet and the security appliances all around having hundreds of devices actively participating on the network," he says.

## Offsite Support

For other infrastructure needs, Orkus chose cloud provider 8x8 for phone service and cloud provider Blue Jeans Network for video conferencing services.

Nasdaq bought a high-end Polycom RealPresence Group 500 video conferencing camera for the conference room, Samsung multifunction printers for the office and APC Smart-UPS uninterruptible power supplies to protect the networking and

**2,000**

The number of entrepreneurs and founders the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center plans to serve in its first year of operation

SOURCE: Nasdaq



broadcasting equipment from blackouts, brownouts and power surges.

"The UPSs can provide battery backup of 10 minutes to an hour, depending on the amount of electricity the equipment draws," says Christian Joice, account manager for CDW.

With the infrastructure complete, Nasdaq's IT team is no longer involved with daily operations. If problems occur, the Center's staff will call the service providers, including CDW, for support, Orkus says.

"We see enormous savings, while getting a high level of support from the vendors," Orkus says.

CDW's Managed Services team monitors the network 24/7 and can remotely troubleshoot the networking equipment by logging in to Cisco Meraki's web portal application. If equipment ever needs to be replaced or a new wireless AP added, CDW will send a technician to the site.

"We can block a malicious website or add a new wireless AP — all within the same portal and all with the same phone call to CDW's Managed Services," Orkus says.

But the Nasdaq IT team is always available if there's an emergency or if the Center staff wants to pursue new technologies in the future.

## Tech Solutions

Orkus says he couldn't have completed the Center's technology buildout without CDW's help.

CDW's mobility practice provides an end-to-end solution, from presales consultation and network engineers who can design a secure local area network and wireless network, to a professional services team that can install and configure the network and a managed services team to manage the entire network operation. And the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center took full advantage of CDW's services.

"We partnered with CDW because we wanted a vendor

that could own the implementation from start to finish," Orkus says.

Nasdaq has the technical expertise in-house, but because its IT staff is so busy, it helped to offload most of the work to CDW, he says.

"I could engage one of our senior network engineers to provide insight and some suggestions, but CDW was able to design and implement it," he says. "So instead of having the engineer spend 100 hours building this out, we would spend five to 10 hours in a series of meetings."

CDW was Nasdaq's primary technology solutions provider for the Center, Orkus says. Not only did the Center purchase Cisco Meraki equipment and subscribe to Adobe Creative Cloud and Office 365 through CDW, it purchased 8x8's phone services and Blue Jeans Network's video conferencing service through CDW's recommendation.

"We were partners every step of the way," he says. "The nice part of working with CDW is that we were able to engage all their different partners."

## 24/7 Uptime

Since its launch in September, the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center has worked with 500 entrepreneurs, and so far, the network and cloud services have all worked perfectly.

"We've been thrilled," Corzine says. "We've had no outages or issues, and that speaks to the resiliency of the cloud-based infrastructure."

They also hosted several events, including auditions for ABC's Shark Tank, where the staff ran workshops to help business owners hone their pitches.

The Center will put its communications infrastructure to the test in the coming months by live-streaming The Nasdaq Stock Market Closing Bell Remotely From San Francisco and by hosting a TEDx live-stream event in February that will attract 500 to 600 people, she says.

In the meantime, the Center's staff members, who work with MacBook Air and MacBook Pro computers, take advantage of all the cloud services, whether they're in the office or working remotely.

"VPNs are nice, but in our case, that would be overkill," Corzine says. "Cloud solutions like Office 365 and Adobe Creative Cloud allow our team to communicate and to design, implement and execute, no matter how disparate our team physically may be."

→ Learn how other companies get started with Infrastructure as a Service, online at [biztechmag.com/laaS](http://biztechmag.com/laaS).

John Lee (Corzine); Matthew Furman (Orkus)

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